

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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TAGS: PGOV, EWWT, MORG, PN
SUBJECT: GOP PLANNING FOR CANAL TREATY IMPLEMENTATION

SUMMARY: AFTER A DISJOINTED START, GOP PLANNING HAS BECOME CENTRALIZED IN AN AD HOC GROUP OF TECHNOCRATS INCLUDING SEVERAL FORMER GOP NEGOTIATING TEAM MEMBERS. (THE SAME GROUP IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION WITH PANCANAL WHICH COMMENCED TWO MONTHS AGO.) THEY HAVE RECOMMENDED CREATION OF A "PANAMANIAN PANAMA CANAL AUTHORITY", A COORDINATING SUPERAGENCY FOR EXERCISE OF PANAMA'S RESPONSIBILITIES AND FOR COORDINATION WITH US AGENCIES UNDER THE TREATIES. PLANNING BY OPERATIONAL GOP AGENCIES (INCLUDING THE NATIONAL GUARD) VARIES FROM FAIRLY ADVANCED IN SOME (E.G., THE NATIONAL PORT AUTHORITY) TO ALMOST NIL; ON THE WHOLE, THE GOP APPEARS STILL RELATIVELY UNPREPARED. THE AD HOC GROUP PROPOSALS HAVE UNDERGONE CONSIDERABLE CHANGE IN THE PAST TWO MONTHS IN THE DIRECTION OF LESS CENTRALIZATION OF GOP GOVERNMENT OPERATION AND GREATER PRIVATE-SECTOR INVOLVEMENT. MORE CHANGE IN THIS DIRECTION APPEARS LIKELY BEFORE FIRM DECISIONS ON ESTABLISHMENT OF SUCH AN AGENCY ARE TAKEN AND WE DO NOT FORESEE SUCH DECISIONS ANYTIME IN THE NEXT FEW WEEKS. END SUMMARY
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1. BACKGROUND; AFTER THE TREATIES WERE SIGNED, SENIOR GOP DECISION-MAKERS AND ALL MEMBERS OF THE NEGOTIATING TEAM WERE INITIALLY OCCUPIED FULL TIME BY PREPARATIONS FOR THE NATIONAL PLEBISCITE. THE WHOLE PROCESS OF GOVERNMENT HERE WAS THEN SWAMPED BY A TIDAL WAVE OF US CONGRESSIONAL VISITORS. DETAILED PLANNING AT THAT STAGE WAS EXTREMELY

LIMITED. LATE IN 1977, HOWEVER, SEVERAL OF THOSE FORMERLY ASSOCIATED WITH THE GOP TECHNICAL NEGOTIATING TEAM ON LANDS AND WATERS AND CANAL ADMINISTRATION BEGAN ON THEIR OWN INITIATIVE TO REFINE AND EXPAND ON EARLIER GOP THINKING ABOUT IMPLEMENTATION. THE PANCANAL BOARD MEETING IN PANAMA IN FEBRUARY WAS SOMETHING OF A WATERSHED; THE GOP NEEDED A RATIONAL PRESENTATION FOR THE BOARD, AND THE SENIOR GOP OFFICIALS NAMED BY TORRIJOS FOR THAT MEETING DREW SUBSTANTIALLY ON THE ONLY PLANNING BACKGROUND AVAILABLE, I.E., THAT OF THE FORMER TECHNICAL GROUP. FORMER NEGOTIATOR EDWIN FABREGA WAS DESIGNATED BY TORRIJOS TO FOLLOW UP ON THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY'S SUGGESTION OF FURTHER INFORMAL MEETINGS BETWEEN PANCANAL AND THE GOP FOR EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION. FABREGA HAS RECONSTITUTED AND SLIGHTLY BEEFED UP HIS NEGOTIATING TECHNICAL SUPPORT GROUP, WHICH HAS SINCE FUNCTIONED ALSO AS AN AD HOC COMMISSION (SEE FBIS/PANAMA PA 251553Y APRIL 78) TO PREPARE BASIC RECOMMENDATIONS FOR GOP ACTION TO IMPLEMENT THE TREATIES.

2. CURRENT GOP ORGANIZATION: THE AD HOC GROUP OF PLANNERS NOTED ABOVE IS FUNCTIONING SO FAR ALONGSIDE, RATHER THAN AS A PART OF, THE FORMAL GOVERNMENTAL STRUCTURE. ITS GUIDANCE IS PROVIDED BY AN EQUALLY AD HOC GROUP OF SENIOR OFFICIALS, LARGELY THOSE ORIGINALLY DESIGNATED TO ATTEND THE MEETING WITH THE PANCANAL BOARD. THE SENIOR DIRECTLY-INVOLVED OFFICIAL IS IRHE (ELECTRIC UTILITY) DIRECTOR LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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EDWIN FABREGA, A STRONG CANDIDATE TO BE FIRST PANAMANIAN DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR OF THE CANAL COMMISSION; FABREGA HAS BEEN THE PRIMARY POINT OF CONTACT FOR THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR OF THE CANAL ZONE IN THE INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS. HIS PRINCIPAL ASSISTANTS RE-CREATE THE OLD LANDS AND WATERS NEGOTIATING TECHNICAL GROUP: DR. FLAVIO VELASQUEZ (AN ECONOMIST) AND DR. OMAR JAEN (A HISTORIAN AND DEMOGRAPHER BY TRAINING), NOMINALLY ATTACHED TO THE PLANNING MINISTRY; ING. ARNOLDO CANO, DIRECTOR OF THE NATIONAL PORT AUTHORITY; AND ING. AUGUSTO ZAMBRANO OF THE PLANNING MINISTRY (AND CLOSE ADVISER OF PLANNING MINISTER BARLETTA). THEY ARE FREQUENTLY ASSISTED BY OFFICIALS OR TECHNICIANS FROM OTHER AGENCIES CO-OPTED FOR SPECIAL PROJECTS OR TASKS. AS YET, THIS GROUP APPEARS TO HAVE ONLY A LOOSE AND INCIPIENT LIAISON WITH THE NATIONAL GUARD. HOWEVER, LTC ARMANDO CONTRERAS, ASSISTANT CHIEF OF STAFF G-3 (OPERATIONS) HAVE BEEN GIVEN PRIMARY ACTION RESPONSIBILITY FOR TREATY IMPLEMENTATION PLANNING FOR THE GUARD AND HAS JOINED FABREGA FOR ONE INITIAL MEETING WITH RESPONSIBLE PLANNERS FROM USSOUTHCOM. GUIDANCE FOR THIS AD HOC GROUP NORMALLY COMES FROM TORRIJOS THROUGH FABREGA. SOME OTHERS WHO NOW ARE MAKING THEIR WEIGHT FELT ARE: TORRIJOS'

CONFIDANTE RODRIGO ("RORY") GONZALEZ; PLANNING MINISTER BARLETTA; VICE-PRESIDENT GERARDO GONZALEZ, AMBASSADOR TO THE US GABRIEL LEWIS; AND ROBERTO HUERTEMATTE, A BUSSINESS-MAN WHO HAS JOINED FABREGA AND THE AD HOC WORKING GROUP IN MEETINGS WITH PANCANAL. ASIDE FROM ASSEMBLING INFORMATION AND MAKING TENTATIVE PLANS, THE FABREGA GROUP HAS CONCENTRATED ON FORMULATING RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE STRUCTURE AND FUNCTIONS OF A SINGLE NEW GOP AGENCY TO COORDINATE ALL ALL ASPECTS OF PANAMANIAN GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATE-SECTOR ACTIVITIES RELATED TO IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NEW TREATIES.

3. GOP OBJECTIVES: GOP PLANNERS SEE THE NEW TREATY AS ESSENTIALLY A TRANSITIONAL INSTRUMENT, WITH A PROGRESSIVE TRANSFER OF FUNCTIONS TO PANAMA OVER THE TREATY'S LIFE. LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AS PANAMA'S NATIONAL OBJECTIVES DURING THIS PROCESS, THE GOP PLANNERS ENVISION: FIRST, PROGRESSIVE INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT WHEREBY PANAMA PREPARED TO ASSUME THESE NEW RESPONSIBILITIES; AND SECOND, A SIMULTANEOUS NATIONAL ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT EFFORT TO EXPLOIT THE ADVANTAGES OF THE COUNTRY'S GEOGRAPHIC POSITION. THESE PLANNERS ATTRIBUTE TO THE US THE MORE LIMITED NATIONAL INTEREST OF COORDINATION WITH PANAMA IN THE EXERCISE OF CERTAIN SPECIFIC RIGHTS RELATING TO THE MANAGEMENT AND DEFENSE OF THE CANAL BY THE US AND THE INCREASING PARTICIPATION OF PANAMA IN THOSE ACTIVITIES.

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4. RECOMMENDED GOP ORGANIZATION: THE GOP PLANNING GROUP HAS PROPOSED CREATION OF A NEW GOP AGENCY, THE "PANAMANIAN PANAMA CANAL AUTHORITY" ("AUTORIDAD PANAMENO DEL CANAL DE PANAMA"). THIS AGENCY WOULD BE PRIMARILY A PLANNING AND COORDINATING BODY WHICH WOULD OVERSEE CONDUCT OF ACTIVITIES OF OPERATIONAL GOP AGENCIES OR THE PANAMANIAN PRIVATE SECTOR IN WHAT IS NOW THE CANAL ZONE. IT WOULD COORDINATE PARTICIPATION OF PANAMANIAN REPRESENTATIVES ON ALL JOINT BODIES ESTABLISHED BY THE NEW TREATIES. IT WOULD RETAIN RESPONSIBILITY FOR ISSUANCE OF LAND-USE LICENSES FOR THE AREA NOW IN THE CANAL ZONE (AT PRESENT, GOP PLANNING ENVISIONS NO EARLY ALIENATION OF TITLE TO LAND IN THAT AREA TO PRIVATE INDIVIDUALS), AND WOULD HAVE SUBSTANTIAL POWERS TO CONTROL LAND USE IN THE ENTIRE CANAL WATERSHED (I.E., INCLUDING AREAS OUTSIDE THE PRESENT CANAL ZONE). THE DIRECTOR OF THE AUTHORITY (SEEN AS THE GOP COUNTERPART TO THE COMMISSION'S AMERICAN ADMINISTRATOR) WOULD BE SUPERVISED BY A BOARD OF DIRECTORS (TO BE MADE UP OF PERTINENT MINISTERS AND OTHER TOP OFFICIALS, INCLUDING PRESUMABLY A SENIOR MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL GUARD GENERAL STAFF. THE PLANNERS INITIALLY ENVISIONED SUBSTANTIAL POWERS, AT LEAST AT THE OUTSET, FOR THE AUTHORITY TO EXCEPT AREAS AND OPERATIONS IN WHAT IS NOW THE CANAL ZONE FROM APPLICATION OF LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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NORMAL PANAMANIAN LAW; THIS SORT OF POWER APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN SUBSTANTIALLY WATERED DOWN ALREADY. FUNCTIONAL ORGANIZATION OF THE AUTHORITY WOULD PROVIDE A STAFF COUNTERPART FOR THE SUB-GROUPS OF THE COORDINATING COMMITTEE ESTABLISHED BY THE AGREEMENT IN IMPLEMENTATION OF ARTICLE III; THE AUTHORITY WOULD COORDINATE WITH THE NATIONAL GUARD REGARDING PARTICIPATION OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE ESTABLISHED BY THE SOFA AND WOULD ALSO COORDINATE GOP PARTICIPATION ON THE JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE ENVIRONMENT, THE CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE AND ANY SEA-LEVEL CANAL STUDY COMMITTEE. THE PLANNERS APPEAR AT THIS TIME TO ASSUME THAT VIRTUALLY ALL RELATIONS WITH USG AGENCIES AND MATTERS PERTAINING TO TREATY IMPLEMENTATION WILL BE SOLUBLE BY THE AUTHORITY WITH SCANT REFERENCE TO THE FOREIGN MINISTRY. AN INITIAL PROPOSAL FOR SUCH AN AGENCY IS UNDERSTOOD TO HAVE GONE BEFORE TORRIJOS AS EARLY AS MARCH. THE GENERAL SUBJECT WAS REPORTEDLY CONSIDERED BY A GENERAL COUNCIL OF STATE MEETING (AT WHICH TORRIJOS WAS REPORTEDLY NOT PRESENT) IN APRIL. IN THE COURSE OF THE PAST TWO MONTHS, THE PLANNERS APPEAR TO HAVE CONSIDERABLE SCALED DOWN THEIR INITIAL IDEAS ABOUT SWEEPING POWERS AND DIRECT OPERATING CAPABILITIES FOR THE AUTHORITY. BUT EXCEPT FOR AUTHORIZING

THE AD HOC PLANNING GROUP TO FUNCTION AND CONDUCT ITS MEETINGS WITH PANCANAL AND AUTHORIZING INITIAL CONTACTS BETWEEN CONTRERAS AND USSOUTHCOM PLANNERS. TORRIJOS APPEARS TO HAVE MADE NO FIRM DECISIONS REGARDING GOP ORGANIZATION FOR TREATY IMPLEMENTATION.

5. PLANNING BY GOP CIVILIAN AGENCIES: OFFICIALS OF THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND ECONOMIC POLICY, WHICH NORMALLY IS THE GOP CENTRAL PLANNING BODY, ARE INVOLVED IN THE IMPLEMENTATION PLANNING PROCESS THROUGH THE AD HOC PLANNING GROUP. IN GOP OPERATING AGENCIES THE EXTENT OF PLANNING LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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VARIES WIDELY. THE NATIONAL PORT AUTHORITY, WHICH WILL BE RESPONSIBLE (AS A NONOPERATING PORT AUTHORITY) FOR THE PORTS OF BALBOA AND CRISTOBAL AND FOR THE PANAMA RAILROAD, IS PROBABLY FURTHEST ADVANCED. ITS DIRECTOR HAS BEEN INVOLVED IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE US SINCE THE TREATY NEGOTIATION STAGE AND HAS FED HIS STAFF INFORMATION AND PLANNING ASSUMPTIONS. THE AUTONOMOUS PUBLIC UTILITY AGENCIES (E.G., IRHE FOR ELECTRICITY; IDAAN FOR WATER AND SEWERS; INTEL FOR PHONES) APPEAR LESS ADVANCED, AND IN SOME CASES THEIR PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR FUTURE PROBLEMS APPEAR TO DIVERGE SOMEWHAT FROM CERTAIN USG ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT THE FUTURE SITUATION IN THESE FIELDS. AGENCIES SUCH AS THE MINISTRIES OF HOUSING, PUBLIC WORKS, GOVERNMENT AND JUSTICE (POSTS, FIRE), LABOR AND SOCIAL WELFARE (INCLUDING SOCIAL SECURITY), HEALTH, ETC., HAVE DONE VARYING AMOUNTS OF PLANNING. BUT IF THERE HAS BEEN ANY MEANINGFUL INTERCHANGE OF INFORMATION, OR CENTRAL GUIDANCE FROM THE AD HOC PLANNING GROUP OR ANY OTHER QUARTER AS TO PLANNING ASSUMPTIONS, WE ARE UNAWARE OF IT. THESE AGENCIES APPEAR TO BE PROCEEDING TO DATE IN A VACUUM WHICH CREATION OF THE GOP CANAL AUTHORITY WOULD PRESUMABLY HELP TO FILL.

6. PLANNING BY THE NATIONAL GUARD: THIS APPEARS TO BE IN A PRIMITIVE STATE. THE GUARD HAS NOT SERIOUSLY ENGAGED THE ISSUE OF USE OF THE FMS CREDIT GUARANTEES ACCOMPANYING THE TREATIES, AND ITS CAPABILITY AND INTEREST IN DOING SO IS ATTENUATED BY FINANCIAL CONSTRAINTS. THE GUARD DOES NOT SERIOUSLY EXPECT (AND MAY WELL NOT REALLY WANT) ANY MAJOR ACTUAL SHARE (AS OPPOSED TO COSMETIC GESTURES) IN OPERATIONAL MILITARY DEFENSE OF THE CANAL IN THE NEAR FUTURE. NOR DOES IT EXPECT ANY INTERNATIONAL TROUBLE THREATENING PANAMA DURING THE TREATY'S LIFE, AND IF ANY SHOULD ARISE IT EXPECTS THE U.S. TO TAKE CARE OF IT. TORRIJOS HAS SPOKEN OF RECRUITING A PICKED FORCE OF HIGH-SCHOOL GRADUATE, ENGLISH-SPEAKING POLICE FOR THE CANAL LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ZONE AREA, INCLUDING JOINT PATROLLING WITH CANAL ZONE AND U.S. MILITARY POLICE. THE GUARD HAS STARTED AN ENGLISH TRAINING COURSE; BUT COMPARED WITH NEEDS, ITS OUTPUT IS VERY LOW. MOST IMPORTANT, THE GUARD CANNOT, ON ITS EXISTING SALARY SCALE FOR POLICE PRIVATES, GET THE PEOPLE TORRIJOS SEEMS TO WANT; BUT SO FAR THERE IS NO REAL EFFORT TO UPGRADE THE OVERALL GUARD PAY STRUCTURE OR TO ESTABLISH A SEPARATE COMPONENT FOR THE FORMER CANAL ZONE. ABOUT TWO MONTHS AGO, THE GUARD REQUESTED AND RECEIVED--AND WERE APPARENTLY SHOCKED BY--BASIC INFORMATION ON U.S. MILITARY AND CANAL ZONE POLICE PAY.

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7. PROSPECTS FOR ACTION IN IMMEDIATE FUTURE: PLANNING FOR TREATY IMPLEMENTATION BY THE GOP IS NOT YET WELL-ADVANCED. WHERE IT OCCURS, IT IS OFTEN CONDUCTED IN A POLICY VACUUM, WITH LITTLE REFERENCE TO A BROADER NATIONAL PLAN. THE PRIVATE SECTOR IS STILL PRETTY MUCH IN THE DARK. THE AD HOC PLANNERS ARE SPREAD MUCH TOO THIN. AND THEY ARE TIED UP IN PREPARING RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BASIC ORGANIZATIONAL DECISIONS WHICH WE THINK ARE UNLIKELY TO BE FORTHCOMING IN THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE. TOP GOP DECISION-MAKERS ARE PREOCCUPIED WITH OTHER PROBLEMS, INCLUDING NATIONAL ELECTIONS NEXT AUGUST; STUDENT UNREST; RETURN OF EXILES AND RENEWAL OF POLITICAL

PARTY ACTIVITY; AND CONTINUING NATIONAL ECONOMIC PROBLEMS. TORRIJOS IS NOT ESPECIALLY WELL DISPOSED TO LONG-RANGE PLANNING OR ADVANCE DECISION-MAKING--HE IS ORIENTED TOWARD CRISIS MANAGEMENT. HE IS NOT CONFRONTED WITH IMMINENT ENTRY INTO FORCE; RATHER, BROOKE TELLS HIM THAT THIS IS STILL FURTHER DOWN THE ROAD THAN SOME OTHER PROBLEMS. THERE ARE STILL CONSIDERABLE DIFFERENCES WITHIN THE GOP AS TO THE PROPER MIX OF GOP VS. PRIVATE SECTOR INVOLVEMENT IN THE FUTURE OF THE CANAL ZONE. THE COORDINATING POWERS OF THE PROPOSED AUTHORITY CUT ACROSS VIRTUALLY ALL EXISTING BUREAUCRATIC LINES, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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INCLUDING THE SACROSANCT NATIONAL GUARD. THE PROPOSED EXTRAORDINARY POWER OF THE AUTHORITY HAS ALREADY BEEN GREATLY ERODED. THUS, WE STRONGLY SUSPECT THAT THE ABOVE-DESCRIBED CURRENT RECOMMENDATIONS WILL NOT BE THE FINAL WORD ON THE SUBJECT, THAT CONTINUED BUREAUCRATIC INTERPLAY WILL FURTHER DILUTE THE PURITY OF THE PLANNERS' AUTHORITY CONCEPT AND THAT DEFINITIVE GOP DECISIONS ABOUT ESTABLISHING ITS NEW AGENCY ARE AT LEAST SEVERAL WEEKS, IF NOT LONGER, IN THE FUTURE.

8. COMMENT: ON THE ONE HAND, THE US WILL WANT AND BADLY NEED SOME SINGLE VOICE FOR THE GOP TO DEAL WITH ON TREATY IMPLEMENTATION. BUT ON THE OTHER, THE POTENTIAL FOR BUREAUCRATIC CONFLICT ON THEIR SIDE--AND CONSEQUENT OPERATIONAL PROBLEMS FOR US--IS EXPANDED BY EVERY POINT AT WHICH ANY OTHER GOP AGENCY GETS INTO THE ACT. WHATEVER FINALLY EMERGES FROM THE GOP DECISION PROCESS REGARDING TREATY IMPLEMENTATION PROBABLY BE HIGHLY UNSTABLE IN THE LONG RUN. ASSUMING THE SUPERAGENCY IS CREATED, THE PERSONAL AUTHORITY OF THE MAN WHO WILL HEAD IT, HIS INFLUENCE WITH TORRIJOS AND HIS SKILL AS A BUREAUCRAT WILL NATURALLY HAVE AN IMPORTANT INFLUENCE ON THE AGENCY'S EFFECTIVENESS. BUT THE MOST IMPORTANT FACT TO NOTE NOW IS THAT WHILE THE QUESTION OF HOW THIS GOVERNMENT WILL TRY TO ORGANIZE TO IMPLEMENT THESE TREATIES IS ACTIVELY MOVING, IT IS NOWHERE NEAR FINAL SETTLEMENT AS YET. JORDEN

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